

Borough of



Wednesbury.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31ST, 1906.

WALTER C. GARMAN, M.D. Edin.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

REPORT

UPON THE

HEALTH OF WEDNESBURY,

FOR THE YEAR 1906,

BY

WALTER GARMAN, M.D., EDIN.,

Medical Officer of Health.

TO THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE
WEDNESBURY TOWN COUNCIL.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my Annual Report for the year 1906.

Taking the number of houses in the town, as given to me by the Borough Surveyor, and deducting therefrom the void houses, it is plain that the population of the town may be fairly fixed at 27,000, instead of 26,700, which was the number upon which the statistics have been calculated during the past few years. Consequently the statistics for 1906 have been based upon an assumed population of 27,000.

1.—VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births registered during 1906 was 871 (males 462, females 409), which is equal to a birth-rate of 32·2 per 1,000 of the population. The natural increase of population by excess of births over deaths was 434.

The deaths from all causes numbered 437, which together with 9 deaths of Wednesbury persons occurring in Public Institutions outside the town, give a grand total of 446. The resulting death-rate is 16·5 per 1,000 of the population.

The deaths of children under 5 years of age numbered 193, or 44·1 per cent of the total deaths. Of these 133 were under one year of age.

The following table furnishes an analysis of deaths under five years of age during the past five years :—

	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906
Premature Birth and Wasting					
Diseases	27	13	20	17	18
Bronchitis and Pneumonia ...	46	41	36	35	36
Scarlatina	12	22	4	—	2
Measles	13	1	55	29	2
Whooping Cough	11	19	7	7	13
Diarrhœa	7	11	42	17	47
Diphtheria	1	4	15	3	3
Other Causes	102	105	103	91	72
	219	216	282	199	193
Percentage of total Deaths ...	48·00	49·4	56	48·8	44·1

The next table gives the deaths due to zymotic disease. These numbered 86 (including 1 case which died in a neighbouring Hospital) —a number equal to a zymotic death-rate of 3·1 per 1,000. For the purpose of comparison, the corresponding figures for the preceding four years are included in the Table :—

	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906
Erysipelas	1	5	—	—	1
Puerperal Fever... ..	2	1	—	—	1
Enteric Fever	5	3	8	8	3
Scarlet Fever	13	27	5	—	2
Measles	14	1	57	30	2
Diphtheria	1	5	19	7	3
Diarrhœa	7	13	44	17	50
Whooping Cough	11	19	7	8	14
Influenza	2	5	7	8	10
	56	79	147	78	86
Death-rate per 1000 ...	1·9	2·9	5·5	2·9	3·1

Following is a table giving the mortality from pulmonary disease :—

Year.	Bronchitis and Pneumonia.	Phthisis.	Total.
1902	98	19	117
1903	81	18	99
1904	70	27	97
1905	75	29	104
1906	88	22	110

The next table is a statement of Vaccination performed during the year ending June 30th, 1906 :—

Births Registered.	Successfully Vaccinated.	Insusceptible	Dead Unvaccinated	Medical Postponements.	Certificates sent in of conscientious objections.	Removals known.	Removals unknown.	Unaccounted for.
884	675	2	90	20	68	10	18	1

The inquests held by the Coroner numbered 13, and may be thus classified :—

Natural Causes	...	...	...	...	4
Accidents	...	...	...	...	7
Suicides...	...	...	...	...	2
Total	...	...	...	...	13

The next table sets forth the deaths occurring during 1906 from all causes, classified according to diseases and ages for the four quarters, and of births for the same period :—

[illegible]

Following is a table of Deaths of Wednesbury persons occurring in Public Institutions in other towns :—

Male.	Female.	Age.	Cause of death.
1	—	16	Infective Endocarditis, Pulmonary Embolism
1	—	23	Bronchitis.
—	1	11	Middle Ear disease, Meningitis.
—	1	35	Appendicitis.
1	—	54	Accidental burns.
—	1	49	Gastric Ulcer.
1	—	52	Carcinoma of Æsophagus.
—	1	17	Appendicitis.
1	—	16	Enteric Fever.

URBAN DISTRICT OF WEDNESBURY.

Causes of, and ages at, death during 1906 :—

CAUSE OF DEATH.					All ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards
Measles	...	...	...	...	2	1	1				
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	2	1	1				
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	14	4	9	1			
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	3		3				
Croup	...	...	...	...	1			1			
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	...	2					2	
Influenza	...	...	...	...	10					6	4
Diarrhœa	...	...	...	...	50	40	7			1	2
Enteritis	...	...	...	...	4	3					1
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...	...	1					1	
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	2					1	1
Phthisis	...	...	...	...	22		1	4	5	10	2
Cancer	...	...	...	...	21					17	4
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	44	13	4	1		13	13
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	44	7	13	2	2	16	4
Alcoholism, Cirrhosis of Liver	...	...	...	...	8					7	1
Venereal Disease	...	...	...	...	2	1	1				
Premature Birth	...	...	...	...	18	18					
Diseases and Accidents of Par- turation	...	...	...	...	3					3	
Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	32			1		22	9
Accidents	...	...	...	...	7	1		1	1	3	1
Suicides	...	...	...	...	2					11	
Other Causes	...	...	...	...	143	44	20	3	4	19	44
All causes					437	133	60	14	12	132	86

Following is a table giving the average birth-rate, death-rate, and zymotic rate for the past ten years :—

Year.	Estimated population.	No. of Births	No. of Deaths	Death-rate per 1000 living.	Birth-rate per 1000 living.	Zymotic death-rate.
1897	25,000	899	499	19·7	35·5	2·7
1898	26,000	939	486	18·6	36·0	3·9
1899	„	900	480	18·4	34·6	3·7
1900	„	925	526	20·2	35·5	4·4
1901	26,544	876	387	14·5	33	2·4
1902	26,700	954	450	16·8	35·9	1·9
1903	„	900	437	16·3	33·7	2·7
1904	„	933	503	18·8	34·9	5·5
1905	„	871	407	15·2	32·6	2·9
1906	27,000	871	446	16·5	32·2	3·1

Following is a list of deaths occurring during the year in each street, the zymotic deaths being separately indicated :—

STREET.	Deaths from all causes	Zymotic Deaths.
Addison Street	4	
Albert Street	4	1
Alma Street	6	2
Bilston Road	8	1
Birmingham Street	2	1
Butcroft	1	
Brunswick Park Road	5	1
Bright Street	6	
Brickkiln Street	5	1
Bridge Street	10	2
Chapel Street	2	1
Corns Street	4	1
Camphill Lane	5	1
Camp Street	10	2
Church Hill	2	1
Church Street	7	1
Church Street, King's Hill	2	1
Cobden Street	12	
Cook Street	3	1
Cross Street	4	1
Corporation Street	2	1
Crankhall Lane	3	
Dale Street	7	1

STREET.						Deaths from all causes	Zymotic Deaths.
Darlaston Road ...	...	...	...	...	...	10	4
Darlington Street...	...	...	...	...	...	9	2
Dudley Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	10	1
Dangerfield Lane ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Edward Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Earps Lane ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Elwell Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	4	1
Foley Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	5	
Foster Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	5	2
Franchise Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	9	1
Finchpath Terrace ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Friar Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Forge Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Foundry Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Great Western Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	4	
Gladstone Terrace...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1
High Street (Upper and Lower)...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Holden Road ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Hitchens Croft ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Hill Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	4	1
Hobbins Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	7	
Hollies Drive ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Holyhead Road ...	...	...	...	...	...	19	2
Hall End ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
High Bullen ...	...	...	...	...	...	3	2
Joynson Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
King's Hill ...	...	...	...	...	...	20	5
King Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	5	
Little Hill... ..	...	...	...	...	...	2	1
Ladbury's Lane ...	...	...	...	...	...	3	1
Lêa Brook... ..	...	...	...	...	...	7	1
Lloyd Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Mill Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	4	
Meeting Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	5	2
Moxley ...	...	...	...	...	...	12	8
Moore Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
North Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
New Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	7	
New Cross Street...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Old Park Road ...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
Old Union Street...	...	...	...	...	...	1	
Oxford Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	
Oakeswell Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	4	
Oakeswell Terrace...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Paul Street ...	...	...	...	...	...		1
Pritchard Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	4	2
Perry Street ...	...	...	...	...	...	6	

STREET.	Deaths from all causes	Zymotic Deaths.
Pound Road	1	
Piercy Street	13	3
Portway Road	11	3
Potters Lane	8	
Park Street	4	
Queen Street	10	2
Russell Street	13	1
Ridding Lane	1	
School Street	2	
School Street, King's Hill	2	
Spring Head	2	
St. Paul's Road	2	1
Short Street	2	1
St. James' Street	2	
Stafford Street	4	
Sparrows Forge Lane	4	2
Trouse Lane	11	4
Union Street	2	
Victoria Street	1	
Vicarage	3	1
Vicar Street	2	1
Windmill Street	3	
Wood Street	2	
Wellcroft Street	2	1
Walsall Road	4	1
Walsall Road, King's Hill	6	
Wood Green	3	2

Following is a table giving the cases of Zymotic Disease notified to the Health Authority under the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act :—

Scarlet Fever	78
Diphtheria	47
Erysipelas	37
Enteric Fever	16
Puerperal Fever	6
Membranous Croup	1
Total	185

The foregoing comprise the figures which appear to me to be necessary in order to enable the Council to form an opinion as to the health of the town during the past year.

Both the general death-rate and the zymotic death-rate are nearly the same as the average for the past 10 years, and although somewhat higher than last year are not in any sense excessive. Moreover, an examination of the figures in the various tables shews that in some respects the year's record is quite satisfactory.

In the first place it should be noted that the deaths from zymotic disease include ten deaths from Influenza, a disease which during the year has prevailed in an epidemic form. The type of the disease has not been severe as a rule, but many hundreds of cases have occurred, and naturally a certain proportion assumed a grave and fatal character. So far, however, as the figures go, it should be remembered that although undoubtedly a zymotic disease, in the sense that it is highly infectious, Influenza is frequently not included in the zymotic list.

Then again, Zymotic enteritis produced no fewer than fifty deaths, so that Infantile Diarrhœa and Influenza together account for sixty deaths of the 86 registered as due to zymotic disease.

I cannot too strongly emphasise the preventability of infantile Diarrhœa, provided that mothers can only be brought to exercise due care in feeding the children. Ignorance and carelessness are mainly responsible for the prevalence of this disease, and in all probability these causes will continue in operation until such time as the feeding and care of infants find a due place in the school curriculum of every girl. Apart from the two diseases just referred to, the zymotic death-rate instead of being 3·1 per 1,000 would only have been ·9 per 1,000.

Unfortunately Whooping Cough prevailed somewhat extensively and produced no fewer than 14 deaths.

Measles, which operated so fatally during the two preceding years, was only responsible for 2 deaths.

We next come to the notifiable diseases, and it is here that the record is most favourable. The following table shows at a glance the cases of each disease notified and the deaths due to each :—

					Cases Notified.	Deaths.
Small Pox ...	...	...	...	...	0	0
Enteric Fever ...	...	...	..	...	16	3
Scarlet Fever ...	...	...	...	...	78	2
Diphtheria...	...	...	...	...	47	3
Puerperal Fever ...	...	...	...	...	6	1
Erysipelas ...	...	...	...	...	37	1
Membranous Croup	...	...	...	...	1	1

These figures I regard as most gratifying, referring as they do to a somewhat dense population in a manufacturing centre. In the first place it will be seen that small-pox has been completely stamped out, judging from the fact that no case of the disease was notified. The explanation is doubtless to be mainly ascribed to the steady and persistent administration of the Vaccination Act, as shown in the vaccination returns. Thus of 794 children alive at the end of June 1906, and born during the previous twelve months, no fewer than 675 were successfully vaccinated. Included in the balance of unvaccinated cases amounting to 113, there were 68 exemptions on account of conscientious objection, and 20 of medical postponement. The percentage of successful vaccinations for the past five years was as follows :—

1902	...	...	...	84·7
1903	...	...	...	88·5
1904	...	...	...	89·2
1905	...	...	...	89·2
1906	...	...	...	87·5

In the remaining balance of unvaccinated children are included removals to other districts. The destination of a considerable number of these is known, and so they will be vaccinated in due course by the vaccinators in their respective localities. The return shews a somewhat marked increase in the number of exemption orders obtained during the year—63 as compared with 41 in the preceding twelve months. Such exemptions year by year lead to a very undesirable state of things, viz.: that by degrees there are growing up a large number of unvaccinated persons, who not only are in danger of themselves contracting small-pox of a dangerous character, but who also are sources of danger to the other unvaccinated portion of the community.

Apart from this serious defect the operation of the Vaccination Act has been most satisfactory, and if only the exemption clause were repealed, the population at large would be efficiently vaccinated. Once this were done, and an Act passed making re-vaccination compulsory, we should stamp out small-pox as completely as in the case of the Germans and some of the other continental nations. From my own observation I am strongly of opinion that the exemptions are sought in a very half-hearted manner, and I do not at all think that the repeal of the exemption clause in the Act would meet with serious opposition.

Only 16 cases of Enteric Fever were notified during the year, which caused 3 deaths. The disease never assumed anything like an epidemic character.

Scarlet Fever is now to all intents and purposes an endemic disease. The notifications numbered 78, and there were 2 deaths. A death-rate of 3 per cent. points to the extreme mildness of the poison.

Of Diphtheria 47 cases were notified, as against 75 in 1905. There were 3 deaths, which was at the rate of about 6 per cent. of the cases. Here again we must conclude either that the disease operated in a more than ordinarily benign manner or that the serum treatment was very widely employed—or again, both factors may have contributed to the result, and this last is probably the correct explanation of the very low percentage of deaths. The cases which came under my own treatment were certainly for the most part of a mild character.

The only other disease to which I would direct attention is Puerperal Fever. Six cases were notified, and one death resulted. There is good reason for thinking that a very large proportion of the confinements were attended solely by midwives, and in uncomplicated cases they are, when properly trained, quite competent to perform the duties associated therewith.

Sanitary Work.

Appended is a table shewing the work carried out in the Sanitary Inspector's Department :—

SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK done in the Sanitary Inspector's Department during the year 1906, in the Urban District of Wednesbury.

				Number of		Abatement Notices		Nuisances abated after notice by	
				Inspections and Observations made	Defects found	Informal by Inspector	Formal by Authority	Inspector	Authority
Foul Conditions	} Dwelling Houses and Schools			240	39	10	22	10	29
Structural Defects				9	9	—	9	—	9
Overcrowding				4	4	—	4	—	4
Unfit for Habitation				15	15		4	—	15
Lodging Houses	...	...	...	60	2	2	—	2	—
Bakehouses	...	...	...	50	7	7	—	7	—
Slaughter Houses	...	...	...	210	17	17	—	17	—
Ashpits and Privies	...	...	...	4010	107	—	9	—	107
Deposits of Refuse and Manure	...	...	...	12	12	5	7	5	7
Water Closets	...	...	...	135	35	—	35	—	35
Defective Traps	} House Drainage			120	70	25	45	25	45
Other Faults				10	10	—	10	—	10
Water Supply	...	...	...	2	—	—	—	—	—
Pigsties	...	...	...	2	2	—	2	—	2
Animals improperly kept	...	...	...	3	3	—	3	—	3
Offensive Trades	...	...	...	1	1	1	—	1	—
Other Nuisances	...	...	...	73	73	18	42	18	55
Totals	...	...	...	4956	406	85	272	85	321

Sample of Water taken for analysis ... 1

Precautions against Infectious Disease :—

Lots of Infected Bedding disinfected or Destroyed	27
Houses disinfected after Infectious Disease	93

Amongst other Sanitary Improvements carried out during the year were the following :—

No. 37 to 42 King Street.—These six houses were closed and the whole of the interior renovated, the drains re-laid, and the outbuildings put in proper repair.

No. 45, 46, and 47, Brickkiln Croft.—These houses were closed owing to their delapidated condition, and were put in proper repair before being re-occupied.

No. 2 to 9 in 3 Court Portway Road.—These houses were closed for renovation, and the drains all re-laid, and the outbuildings re-built.

The Darlaston Nut and Bolt Works, Bright Street.—The common privy was removed, and six water closets connected to the sewer substituted in its place.

No. 15 Corn Street.—What had been a nuisance to the Workshops at the Tram Depôt was overcome by removing the ashpit and privies, and erecting two water closets connected to the sewer in their place.

In 18 instances the midden system has been removed after notices, and water closets provided with receptacles for dry ashes.

Eleven houses which previously drained into dumbwells have been connected to the deep sewer.

The nightsoil contractor has emptied and cleansed 6836 ashpits and cisterns during the year, this being 1054 more than the previous year—which is a record on any previous year. The work has been smoothly carried out, and generally speaking with greater efficiency than in any previous year.

The number of Slaughter Houses remains the same as last year : these have been frequently visited and orders given for lime washing as required. In one case, back 19 Market Place, it was found necessary to close the same owing to its insanitary and delapidated condition, and the license was transferred to more commodious premises

at back 23A Market Place, with entrance from Spring Head. These premises were all re-drained, the yard and other portions paved, water laid on, &c., and they provide ample room for slaughter house, fasting pen, and cleansing room and good yard, and are in every way suitable for that purpose.

The Inspectors under the Contagious Diseases (Animals') Act have now 34 cowsheds kept by 19 owners, and 67 dairies under their control, to which upwards of 400 visits have been made, and white-washing ordered as required. At the close of the year I inspected each of the cowsheds, and found that many alterations are required, which will I hope be carried out early in 1907.

Factory and Workshops' Act.

Under this Act there are 26 Bakehouses, and these have received periodical inspections; a record is kept of their cubical area and ventilation; orders have been given in 7 instances for limewashing, etc., which were at once carried out. There are also 109 other workshops of various trades, viz.: Milliners and Dressmakers 25, Boot and Shoe Makers 9; the rest being Tailors. Nut Makers, Gunlock Makers, File Cutters, Breeze banks, Smiths, Wheelwrights, etc. Most of these places have been visited, and in six cases alterations have been made in the closet accommodation, and in several cases whitewashing has been ordered, and the same has always been promptly attended to.

It is with much pleasure that I have become aware of the intention of the Council to put in force in the Borough, Bye-laws which will require owners of cow-sheds to conform to definite regulations for the sanitary management of such sheds. Such a step marks a real advance in the sanitation of the town, for few measures can be of greater importance in safe-guarding the town's health than those which tend to the purity of the milk supply. Disease in many forms undoubtedly arises from time to time from the consumption of impurities in milk;

and anything which can be done by means of ample accommodation and general cleanliness, with adequate ventilation, to improve the health of the cattle and so guard against tuberculosis and other diseases, will more than repay the efforts of the Council in that direction.

Do what we will, however, Wednesbury remains after all a town conducted on the privy-midden system—a system which must always be associated with a certain amount of unavoidable disease. For the remedying of this, nothing of a wholesale character can be done. Nevertheless, as serious defects arise from time to time they may be removed by inducing property owners to substitute water closets connected with the sewers, and dry ashpits for the existing privy-middens. In this way little by little the sanitation of the town may be improved.

With these remarks I may conclude my survey of the figures and events of the year from a health standpoint. The figures and statistics supplied will enable the Council to judge of the general conditions prevailing in the town—conditions which I feel are not unfavourable, whether they be taken alone or compared with those prevailing in the surrounding districts.

I remain, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER C. GARMAN, M.D., EDIN.,

Medical Officer of Health.